



Complete Summary

TITLE

Mental health: percent of patients beginning a new episode of treatment for substance use disorder (SUD) who maintain continuous treatment involvement for at least 90 days after qualifying date.

SOURCE(S)

Office of Quality Performance. FY 2009, Q2 technical manual for the VHA performance measurement system. Washington (DC): Veterans Health Administration; 2009 Jan 5. various p.

Measure Domain

PRIMARY MEASURE DOMAIN

Process

The validity of measures depends on how they are built. By examining the key building blocks of a measure, you can assess its validity for your purpose. For more information, visit the [Measure Validity](#) page.

SECONDARY MEASURE DOMAIN

Does not apply to this measure

Brief Abstract

DESCRIPTION

This measure is used to assess the percent of patients beginning a new episode of treatment for substance use disorder (SUD) who maintain continuous treatment involvement for at least 90 days after the qualifying date.

RATIONALE

Research has shown that good addiction treatment outcomes are contingent on adequate lengths of treatment. There is no predetermined length of addiction treatment that assures success, but duration of treatment is the factor most consistently associated with successful addiction treatment outcome. Many patients drop out during the initial 90 days of treatment with limited clinical benefit and high rates of relapse. While two contacts per month for three months

would rarely be sufficient, most patients require ongoing treatment for **at least** this duration to establish early remission.

Various patient, provider and program level interventions have been associated with improved treatment retention. The initial intensity of treatment should be considered primarily as a means to promote treatment retention (e.g., severely dependent patients typically may require multiple treatment contacts per week in order to stabilize early remission). However, for many patients following initial stabilization, it may be appropriate to provide a lower intensity of addiction-focused treatment extending over a longer duration with superior remission rates for those who remain engaged in treatment for 6-12 months. Available evidence supports the effectiveness of telephone follow-up for patients after they have stabilized during the initial weeks of outpatient treatment. Many individuals continue to benefit from treatment (e.g., methadone maintenance) over a period of years.

Consistent with the *VHA/DoD Guideline for Treatment of Substance Use Disorders*, this performance measure is intended to emphasize the importance of early treatment retention as an essential condition of quality care for addiction. Treatment duration beyond 3 months presents important opportunities to individualize treatment plans consistent with treatment response over time by adjusting the intensity of psychosocial interventions (e.g., frequency of group sessions), pharmacotherapy (e.g., dose amount and monitoring frequency), community recovery support (e.g., promoting Twelve-Step program involvement), and management of comorbid conditions.

PRIMARY CLINICAL COMPONENT

Substance use disorder (SUD); continuity of care

DENOMINATOR DESCRIPTION

Veterans beginning specialty treatment for substance use disorder (SUD)*

***Note:** Universe includes all veterans with an SUD outpatient encounter or inpatient discharge from a SUD specialty bed section in Veterans Health Administration (VHA).

See the related "Denominator Inclusions/Exclusions" field in the Complete Summary.

NUMERATOR DESCRIPTION

Veterans beginning treatment for substance use disorder (SUD) who maintain continuous treatment involvement for at least 90 days as demonstrated by at least 2 days with visits every 30 days for a total of 90 days in any of the outpatient specialty SUD clinics (see the related "Numerator Inclusions/Exclusions" field in the Complete Summary)

Evidence Supporting the Measure

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE CRITERION OF QUALITY

- A clinical practice guideline or other peer-reviewed synthesis of the clinical evidence
- One or more research studies published in a National Library of Medicine (NLM) indexed, peer-reviewed journal

Evidence Supporting Need for the Measure

NEED FOR THE MEASURE

Unspecified

State of Use of the Measure

STATE OF USE

Current routine use

CURRENT USE

External oversight/Veterans Health Administration
Internal quality improvement

Application of Measure in its Current Use

CARE SETTING

Behavioral Health Care
Substance Use Treatment Programs/Centers

PROFESSIONALS RESPONSIBLE FOR HEALTH CARE

Physicians
Psychologists/Non-physician Behavioral Health Clinicians
Social Workers

LOWEST LEVEL OF HEALTH CARE DELIVERY ADDRESSED

Single Health Care Delivery Organizations

TARGET POPULATION AGE

Unspecified

TARGET POPULATION GENDER

Either male or female

STRATIFICATION BY VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Unspecified

Characteristics of the Primary Clinical Component

INCIDENCE/PREVALENCE

Unspecified

ASSOCIATION WITH VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Unspecified

BURDEN OF ILLNESS

Unspecified

UTILIZATION

Unspecified

COSTS

Unspecified

Institute of Medicine National Healthcare Quality Report Categories

IOM CARE NEED

Living with Illness

IOM DOMAIN

Effectiveness

Data Collection for the Measure

CASE FINDING

Users of care only

DESCRIPTION OF CASE FINDING

Veterans beginning specialty treatment for substance use disorder (SUD)*

***Note:** Universe includes all veterans with an SUD outpatient encounter or inpatient discharge from a SUD specialty bed section in Veterans Health Administration (VHA).

DENOMINATOR SAMPLING FRAME

Patients associated with provider

DENOMINATOR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS

Inclusions

Veterans beginning specialty treatment for substance use disorder (SUD)*

***Note:** Universe includes all veterans with an SUD outpatient encounter or inpatient discharge from a SUD specialty bed section in Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Refer to the original measure documentation for additional details.

Exclusions

- Non-veterans are excluded from this measure.
- Patients without an initial enrollment date
- Patients discharged dead or deceased during the 90-day retention period
- Smoking cessation visits are excluded.

RELATIONSHIP OF DENOMINATOR TO NUMERATOR

All cases in the denominator are equally eligible to appear in the numerator

DENOMINATOR (INDEX) EVENT

Clinical Condition
Encounter
Therapeutic Intervention

DENOMINATOR TIME WINDOW

Time window precedes index event

NUMERATOR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS

Inclusions

Veterans beginning treatment for substance use disorder (SUD) who maintain continuous treatment involvement for at least 90 days as demonstrated by at least 2 days with visits every 30 days for a total of 90 days in any of the outpatient specialty SUD clinics

Refer to the original measure documentation for additional details.

Exclusions

- Admission during the retention period for at least 4 calendar days disqualifies the patient from the measure.
- Veterans not seen in any substance abuse clinic in Veterans Health Administration (VHA) during the first 30 days of the retention period fail the measure.

Refer to the original measure documentation for additional details.

MEASURE RESULTS UNDER CONTROL OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS, ORGANIZATIONS AND/OR POLICYMAKERS

The measure results are somewhat or substantially under the control of the health care professionals, organizations and/or policymakers to whom the measure applies.

NUMERATOR TIME WINDOW

Fixed time period

DATA SOURCE

Administrative data
Medical record

LEVEL OF DETERMINATION OF QUALITY

Individual Case

PRE-EXISTING INSTRUMENT USED

Unspecified

Computation of the Measure

SCORING

Rate

INTERPRETATION OF SCORE

Better quality is associated with a higher score

ALLOWANCE FOR PATIENT FACTORS

Unspecified

STANDARD OF COMPARISON

Internal time comparison

Evaluation of Measure Properties

EXTENT OF MEASURE TESTING

Unspecified

Identifying Information

ORIGINAL TITLE

Substance use disorder - continuity of care.

MEASURE COLLECTION

[Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2009: Veterans Health Administration \(VHA\) Performance Measurement System](#)

MEASURE SET NAME

[Performance Measures](#)

MEASURE SUBSET NAME

[Mental Health Measures](#)

DEVELOPER

Veterans Health Administration

FUNDING SOURCE(S)

Unspecified

COMPOSITION OF THE GROUP THAT DEVELOPED THE MEASURE

Unspecified

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURES/OTHER POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Unspecified

ADAPTATION

Measure was not adapted from another source.

RELEASE DATE

2002 Nov

REVISION DATE

2009 Jan

MEASURE STATUS

This is the current release of the measure.

This measure updates a previous version: Office of Quality and Performance (10Q). FY 2008, Q1 technical manual for the VHA performance measurement system. Washington (DC): Washington (DC); 2007 Oct 31. 315 p.

SOURCE(S)

Office of Quality Performance. FY 2009, Q2 technical manual for the VHA performance measurement system. Washington (DC): Veterans Health Administration; 2009 Jan 5. various p.

MEASURE AVAILABILITY

The individual measure, "Substance Use Disorder - Continuity of Care," is published in "FY 2009, Q2 Technical Manual for the VHA Performance Measurement System."

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NQMC STATUS

This NQMC summary was completed by ECRI on November 9, 2004. The information was verified by the measure developer on December 10, 2004. This NQMC summary was updated by ECRI Institute on January 10, 2008. The information was not verified by the measure developer. This NQMC summary was updated again by ECRI Institute on January 8, 2010. The information was verified by the measure developer on March 22, 2010.

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